

Las Bodas en Los Paises Hispanohablantes ***Weddings in Spanish Speaking Countries***



España

Weddings are big affairs in Spain and you're likely to find the whole extended family and entire village turns out to celebrate (expect at least 200 guests at traditional 'bodas'). Some of the customs are similar, such as throwing rice, but others are less familiar.

- In line with most social events in Spain, most Spanish weddings start late (often the ceremony won't start until 7 p.m.) and finish very, very late (or early, depending on how you look at it).
- At many weddings, the men will be offered a cigar and the women a little present (usually something which looks and smells nice). If you're not used to cigars, be careful- they can be pretty strong.
- Spanish weddings can be quite noisy with plenty of loud firecrackers going off once the happy couple emerge from the church.
- There is no best men and there are no speeches. Also, the groom's mother accompanies him down the aisle.
- Finally, tread carefully. Those old churches look quaint but the floorboards on the aisles have had some serious wear over the centuries. Nothing spoils a marriage more than an overweight foreigner going through the floorboards

Mexico

In Mexico the traditional marriage ceremonies are sponsored by couple's Godparents. Godparents are the benefactor for the couples. The mentors accompany the bride and the groom throughout their wedding their engagement and wedding. The Godparents or the padrinos gift the couple with a rosary and a Bible during their wedding ceremony.

To symbolize the bonding of the couple a white ribbon or rosary called a 'lasso' is wrapped around the necks of the couple as they exchange marriage vows. It is mandatory for every Mexican groom to offer his bride a wedding present of thirteen gold

coins to signify his long term commitment to support his new wife. These thirteen coins are later blessed by the priest during the marriage ceremony.

It is custom in Mexico to toss red beads at the newlyweds as they leave the church to bring good luck and prosperity in their married life.

A traditional Mexican reception is held wherein all the guests are invited upon for a grand feast and unlimited fun. All the guests join hands and form a heart shape around the couple as they begin their first dance. Salsa, merengue and the flamenco guitar music may add a Latin flare to the reception. This symbolizes happiness, love and warmth in their new wedded life.

The Mexican wedding cake is cut by the newlyweds and distributed among the guests. A paper mache container (la piñata) is suspended from the ceiling at Mexican traditional wedding celebrations. This usually shapes like an animal or can be of a heart shape. This container is stuffed with candies, chocolates and toffees. On breaking open the container the items are shared by the newlyweds and guests.

Colombia

► *The Candle Ceremony*

There is a traditional custom in Colombian Christian weddings. After the ring ceremony, the groom and the bride each has to light a candle. This custom has a special meaning. Each lighted candle represents the life of each one. After that, they light another candle together and put out the first candle of each one, leaving only the one that they lit as a couple. This bright candle means that now they are the same body and they are going to share every moment of their lives.



El Salvador

► *Escorting the Bride to the Church*

All the wedding ceremonies around the world try to express different things through different ceremonies. For some reason, in some places in El Salvador, when a wedding is celebrated, the wedding ceremony service starts without the bride. The groom and all the people who have been invited to the ceremony are waiting for her during the service.

When the wedding ceremony service starts, a group of seven men goes to the bride's home. The bride and her family are waiting for seven white cars which escort the bride's car until they arrive at the church. Finally, the bride enters the church and then the nuptial song starts playing.

Las Arras

This tradition is usually associated with Hispanic families.

The madrina de arras (godmother of arras) holds the 13 gold coins the bridegroom presents to the bride. The coins, or arrhea, was a Roman custom of breaking gold or silver, one half to be kept by the woman and the other half by the man, as a pledge of marriage.

The custom of the giving of wedding coins originated in Spain. Thirteen gold coins (arras) are given to the bride by the bridegroom, signifying his willingness to support her. Often presented in ornate boxes or gift trays, this represents the brides dowry and holds good wishes for prosperity. These coins become a part of their family heirloom.

The symbolism, which may be explained by the officiant, is that 13 Gold Coins Example the Groom recognizes his responsibility as a provider, and pledges his ability to support and care for her. Acceptance by the bride means taking that trust and confidence unconditionally with total dedication and prudence.